



## Frequently Asked Questions from Our March 21 Community Conversations Event

### What is the College's Facilities Master Plan?

The FMP fulfills a state requirement to ensure all of Maryland's community colleges have plans and programs in place to meet the needs of residents for access to locally provided postsecondary education, including having preparations in place to respond to enrollment and academic requirements.

The current plan envisions replacing Falcon Hall and Science South with a three-story building with rooftop HVAC units along Fenton Street that wraps around the corner at Takoma Avenue. The project would take approximately four years to design and build—two years to design and then two years to construct.

The current plan is the result of the College's effort to respond to and balance the needs of the students, community, neighbors, and fiscal discipline. Concerns about height and time to completion paired with a growing urgency for modern facilities—the project has been in the FMP since 2004 and in the capital budget since 2007—along with fiscal constraints caused the College to pursue the three-story, four-year completion option in the most current FMP.

The previous facilities master plan included a replacement project on the site of the current buildings Science North and Science South along Fenton Street. The project replaces these buildings sequentially with four-story buildings. The project would take eight years to design and construct as a phased project.

### What is the big-picture, holistic vision for the TP/SS Campus?

The TP/SS Campus is a full-service undergraduate institution tasked with delivering high-quality, low-cost, locally provided postsecondary education.

To live up to our mission, the original east campus needs to be modernized. Students need twenty-first-century learning environments to succeed at work or their transfer institution. Every student must take math and science courses to obtain a degree in Maryland—so local access to quality facilities is key to student completion and success.

Page three of the FMP states:

*This comprehensive collegewide effort includes four plans that describe and illustrate a future vision for the Takoma Park/Silver Spring, Germantown, and Rockville Campuses and for Workforce Development & Continuing Education.*

*The plan's purpose is to establish a framework for development of these campuses as well as strategic direction ... that is cohesive, integrated, and visionary.*

The FMP goes on to list several guidelines for TP/SS, including:

- *Develop new and renovated facilities to support academic and student programming in the support of the College's mission.*
- *Preserve the existing character of the existing historic neighborhood adjacent to the east campus.*
- *Investigate opportunities for future campus growth in Silver Spring.*

## How does the capital budget support College building projects?

Once an FMP is complete, the College evaluates which projects are included in the capital budget to obtain funding from the state and the county.

A replacement facility for the current math/science facilities has been in the FMP since 2004 and in the capital budget since 2007.

No other major project for the TP/SS Campus is in the capital budget.

The capital budget reflects decisions made in the FMP and includes descriptions of project components that contribute to the project's costs.

## Has the College considered potential expansion options (storage facility, auto body shop, Burlington Avenue, buildings on Fenton site)?

The FMP does envision, when expansion is necessary, to expand into Silver Spring along Fenton Street, not in Takoma Park.

*There are no plans to expand into Takoma Park.*

The College evaluated the purchase of properties on Fenton Street, Burlington Avenue, and King Street as part of previous FMP deliberations. The analysis by Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell, real estate consultants, was completed on July 1, 2008. The analysis documented an expense to acquire the properties along Fenton (storage facilities) of more than \$25 million.

The parking lot on the west campus (Georgia Avenue) was also evaluated during previous FMP deliberations. Analysis by the Smith Group, an architecture and engineering firm, in 2005 show a math/science facility would have to be of significant height, 120 feet or eight stories tall, which would add significant expense to the project. Science buildings with labs are expensive and tall science buildings are more expensive.

The state and county did not pay for the purchase of the Giant Food Bakery, the now Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, and its parking lot. Student fees financed the purchase. In the short term, easy access to parking is a paramount concern to our students. The College has a current parking space deficit: 1,180.

The College ultimately located the Cultural Arts Center (CAC) on Georgia Avenue in response to community concerns about the placement of the CAC in Jesup Blair Park. This action left the parking lot as the only space available for future expansion at an affordable price. The College's space deficits and demands for fiscal prudence requires that the College leverage this urban setting to derive maximum capacity on that site when expansion is needed. The 2005 SmithGroupJJR report evaluated various options for the lot. They also evaluated a test for the parking lot.

Falcon Hall, Science North, and Science South are in poor condition and beyond their useful lives. VFA performed facilities condition assessments on each of the College's buildings in 2002, 2006, and again in 2013.

In summary, over the course of more than 10 years and several FMP updates the College relied on analysis by:

- Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell real estate assessment in 2008 regarding Fenton and King Streets, and Burlington Avenue properties.
- The SmithGroupJJR in 2005 regarding the use of the parking lot on the west campus.
- VFA Inc. regarding a facilities condition assessment in 2002, 2006, and 2013.

## How is Falcon Hall (including the swimming pool) affected by the College's plans?

The FMP envisions replacing Falcon Hall with a Health and Fitness Center at the current site of Science North.

The plan also speculates about potentially locating it in Jesup Blair Park. That location would require significant community input and the permission and approval of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission at a minimum.

The VFA facilities condition assessment (FCA) rated Falcon Hall poorly—beyond its useful life. The building is 39 years old.

There are several swimming pool initiatives under consideration, including the construction of a Montgomery County Department of Recreation aquatics center on the Takoma Park Campus of Washington Adventist Hospital.

Additionally, a new recreation and aquatic center is planned for downtown Silver Spring as part of a larger development near the Metro stop at Fenwick Lane and Second Avenue approximately one and a half miles from the Campus. It is estimated construction will begin later this year and be completed in 2019 well before any changes are implemented on the campus.

## How are traffic/parking/biking managed currently, during construction, and after?

The FMP discussed traffic, parking, transit, and pedestrian circulation on pages 15 to 24. The plan notes that the majority of students—46 percent—take transit to the campus and eight percent walk or bike.

Two percent of students are dropped off and another four percent carpool. Enhancing the drop-off process is needed.

The Montgomery County Planning Board review of the project under the Mandatory Referral process will include analysis of traffic, parking, transit access, and pedestrian circulation as is standard practice. A completed project design is submitted for review. The review includes staff analysis, a public hearing, and action by the five-member planning board.

The current plan envisions a project with an approximate four-year timeline—two years to complete design and two to complete the construction.

The College will work with the architect and ultimately the construction company to mitigate impacts on the neighborhood and the campus during the construction phase of the project.

The College can be more specific with mitigation measures in the later phases of the design process. Examples of mitigation include:

- Restrict hours for use of construction equipment.
- Monitor the decibel level when construction equipment is in use.
- Restrict construction vehicles idling and restrict the use of construction vehicle backup horns/beepers to reduce noise.

## Can the College provide street renderings of proposed new buildings?

The current FMP provides conceptual renderings of the project—three-story with HVAC rooftop unit along Fenton Street and a portion of Takoma Avenue.

The FMP enumerates the size of the building. The plan also illustrates the setbacks from the curb along

Takoma Avenue that keep and protect the current green space that exists along Takoma Avenue and at the corner of Fenton Street. The plan also envisions landscaping and tree save. (See page 57 of the FMP)

*The FMP recognizes the character of historic neighborhood and the importance of crafting facilities sensitive to this location.*

More detailed renderings will be prepared by an architect hired after a competitive process during the design phase. The College will seek an architect with experience in designing buildings in historic and residential areas.

*The renderings produced by the architect will be the result of an iterative design charrette process with a stakeholders' work group—stakeholders will work with the architect and the College to collaboratively address concerns about the building.*

The design phase will cost approximately \$10 million and will take 18 months to two years to complete.

### **Can Silver Spring residents participate in these discussions?**

The College values and welcomes the participation of and the feedback from all stakeholders, including residents of Silver Spring.

### **Will Jesup Blair Park be considered as a building site, and will the College preserve parkland, trees, and the mansion?**

The current FMP shows two locations for the future Health and Wellness Center (replacement for Falcon Hall).

The current site of Science North, and speculates about a site in Jesup Blair Park.

*The College recognizes the location of this facility in the park would require significant community outreach and input along with the permission of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC).*

*If this option were pursued, the College understands any project would have to protect the trees and the history of the park and the mansion.*

The College has consistently heard from decision makers and community leaders about the need to continue to revitalize Georgia Avenue and to activate the park to maximize its recreational value as an anchor location in South Silver Spring.

### **Will the College honor historic preservation regulations?**

*No expansion off the original east campus into historic Takoma Park will occur.*

Montgomery College will follow all applicable regulations as we have in the past, which also includes the city's tree preservation and stormwater regulations.

The Montgomery County Planning Board project review—the Mandatory Referral process—will ensure compliance with applicable regulations as will the building permit process.

The FMP states:

- Preserve the existing character of the existing historic neighborhood adjacent to the east campus.
- Investigate opportunities for future campus growth in *Silver Spring*.

## What is the projected timeline of the design process and construction?

The current FMP—one three-story building with a rooftop HVAC unit along Fenton Street and Takoma Avenue—has a four-year timeline.

1. Design—Fall 2017 to Fall 2019
2. Construction—Fall 2019 to Fall 2021

Previous FMP—two four-story buildings with rooftop HVAC units—has an eight-year timeline.

1. Design Phase One—Fall 2017 to Fall 2019
2. Construction Phase One—Fall 2019 to Fall 2021
3. Design Phase Two—Fall 2021 to Fall 2023
4. Construction Phase Two—Fall 2023 to Fall 2025

## Will the College create working groups for the project?

The College's president, Dr. Pollard, agreed that the College, in partnership with the City of Takoma Park, will form an advisory committee.

The College will use a design charrette process to provide for significant and meaningful input into the design of the building. A work group of key stakeholders will be formed. The charrette process will enable the work group to engage in a collaborative iterative design process.

The charrette will be guided by the project architect who will be hired through a competitive process. The College will seek an architect with residential and historic experience.

## How will building aesthetics and design be developed?

The College will engage in an iterative design charrette with stakeholders to balance the needs of the neighbors, students, and fiscal discipline.

A charrette is an intensive collaborative design process that will be led by a skilled architect hired by the College after a competitive selection process. This process will enable the College, architects, and stakeholders to address specific and detailed concerns regarding aesthetics and design just as the College has done on three previous projects on this campus. The College will seek an architect with residential and historic experience.

## How will the College address lab safety in the building?

Laboratories have been on the campus for more than 50 years without any significant issues, incidents, or concerns.

The labs are strictly for undergraduate instruction—no research or commercial activities take place in the labs.

The College complies with all local, state, and federal safety requirements. The College's Office of Environmental Safety ensures compliance and thus the safety of our students and the campus—and our surrounding communities.

Many of the materials used in the labs are found in households and are similar to those found in Montgomery County Public Schools, many of which are located in residential settings.

Modern labs will include enhanced safety equipment.

### **What are plans for the planetarium?**

A planetarium is currently located on campus. It is a vital asset to our academic programs and popular with community users such as youth groups.

The new facility will continue to include a planetarium as noted in the FMP. The facility is not an observatory with a protruding telescope. Instead, a planetarium is a theater-like setting built to present educational materials relative to astronomy. It utilizes a star projection system contained inside the building. A modern facility will provide more access to the planetarium and include moveable walls to accommodate up to 200 participants for instruction and seminars in addition to community use.

### **Supporting documents may be downloaded at:**

[www.montgomerycollege.edu/conversations](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/conversations)

### **Additional questions?**

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